THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a). (b) and (d) Pyrites can be used either for conversion to sulphuric acid or to elemental sulphur. Since sulphuric acid in large quantity cannot be carried economically for long distances, elemental sulphur is required to feed fertiliser plants all over the country. We have no indigenous source of elemental sulphur and at present our entire requirement of elemental sulphur is imported.

In order to exploit the indigenous pyrite resources Govt. set up sulphuric acid plants at Sindri based on Amjhore pyrites. These plants, however, could not sustain operation and achieved only a very low capacity utilisation.

The plants therefore were closed and the Amjhore Mines also remained largely idle as a result, since November, 1982.

If the imports of sulphur are to be reduced to any appreciable extent. It would be necessary first to establish a technology for conversion of indigenous pyrites to elemental sulphur. M/s. PPCL, a public undertaking is carrying out studies in this direction, with assistance from UNDP and foreign experts. Proposals from M/s. PPCL for utilisation of Amjhore Pyrites to produce sulphuric acid for SSP production by them are also separately under consideration.

(c) The quantity (with value) of Sulphur imported during 1983-84 and 1984-85 is as under:—

Year	Quantity (M/T)	C&F Value (Rs. Lakhs)
1983-84	10,11,019	12,286.11
1984-85	13,08,607	22.422.14

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, the pyrite production has been going down. The Government has also accepted this. Thirty-two sulphuric plants have closed down. The production is very much reduced. What they have not mentioned is why the production has gone down. Our information is that wherever there are pyrites plants and sulphuric acid is produced, the consuming centre has to be very close to the pyrites plant. There is a chemical reaction which sets in. In this case, the plant at Sindri is 400 kilometres away from Amjhore. The question is what does the Government propose to do as far as improving the production is concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question House is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Handing over of the Telephone System in Metropolitan Cities to a Public Sector Corporation

*84. SHRI RAFIQE ALAM:
SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to hand over the telephone system in Metropolitan cities to public sector corporations to improve their functioning; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) and (b) A suggestion for creating a separate corporate body to develop and operate the telephone services at Delhi and Bombay has been examined by an inter-ministerial committee. The Committee has submitted its report which is under consideration.